AN

ANSWER

TO

Six Queries,

PROPOSED

To a *Gentlewoman* of the Church of *ENGLAND*, by an Emiſſary of the Church of *ROME*; fitted to a Gentlewomans Capacity.

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A PREFACE.

IT is of no further concernment to acquaint the Publick with the occaſion of penning theſe Papers, than as the occaſion might have an influence on the Deſign; and as it may be very uſeful to inform the Reader of the Deſign, *that he may the better know what to expect in the* Performance.

He may therefore be pleaſed to underſtand that the following Queries were tendred to a Gentlewoman of the Communion of the Church of England *by a* Romaniſt, *who had a deſign of ſeducing her; and that they were anſwered by another hand, but on ſuch Principles, or in ſuch a way of management, as that it did not give her the deſired ſatisfaction. This gave occaſion to ſome that were concerned for her, to ſhew the Paper to ſome others, in order to the inviting them to undertake it in a way that might be likely to prove more ſucceſsful. By this means of Communication it came at length to my hands, from a Perſon who firſt deſired my Opinion concerning it; and then with ſome earneſtneſs importuned me to commit my thoughts to writing. Purſuant therefore to this occaſion, my Deſign was in the firſt place to ſhew from ſound Principles, that the Church of* England *is able to defend her Reformation from the Errors of the* Romaniſts, *and to clear her ſelf, as far as She is charged with that Breach of Communion which followed thereupon, without giving any advantage to the*

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Non-Conformists *to justifie either their first Separation from Us, or their Eternal Subdivisions from one another. Nor was I willing to engage a Person in the Gentlewomans condition, in any Controversies that might be spared without Injury to the* merit *of the* Cause; *or to debate even such as could not so be spared, by such Arguments as might exceed her opportunities of Enquiring, or her capacity of Judging, so as to oblige her to depend on the conduct of others more Inquisitive and Judicious. But I have either waved* Authorities *where I could debate the Case by Arguments less liable to Dispute, and better suited to the understanding of a Gentlewoman; or where I have been necessitated to insist on them, I have endeavoured to make out their Credibility by such* Presumptions *as are easie to be understood, and familiar in parallel Cases, and generally granted as most* Prudent, *whenever* unskilful Persons *find themselves obliged to acquiesce in the conduct of Persons* more skilful *and* judicious *than themselves. And I have purposely avoided all Citations of* Authors, *even where necessary, but such as were to be had, even in* English, *and therefore might be consulted by the Gentlewoman her self.*

I confess those other Reasonings fit for Scholars, as they are more subtle, *so they are withal more* solid *and* conclusive. *But withal I consider,* 1. *That those things wherein* Scholars *have the advantage of* unlearned Persons, *are principally such wherein* Reading *is absolutely necessary for their Historical conveyance to us. It is certainly impossible for any to know what Doctrines were maintained in the* Apostles times (*and consequently what Doctrines are* true, *where they are supposed capable of no other Evidence of their being true, but because they were so maintained*) *without insight into the several Histories and Authors of the intermediate Ages through which they are to be deduced. But for other things whose evidence of their being true, does not depend on such a conveyance, the Rea-*

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ſon of the thing is a ſufficient Evidence; and of this every equally rational Perſon, *how little ſoever he be converſant in Authors, is an* equally competent Judge. *And of this kind are many of the things here mentioned, on which the ſtreſs of the cauſe depends. The prudent Reader will eaſily diſcern which they are, without my inſtancing. And* 2. *even in thoſe things which depend on* Poſitive Revelation, *and wherein the only means of our* Aſſurance *of them is* Hiſtorical Tradition; *though it be indeed true that Perſons of little Reading cannot ſo competently aſſure themſelves of the Writings and Opinions of former Ages, without the aſſiſtance of others more converſant in thoſe Studies: Yet ſince it is not the way of Prudent rational Perſons, therefore to conclude a thing to have been revealed by the Apoſtles, becauſe ſuch Authors tell us that it was ſo; much leſs becauſe ſuch Authors maintained it, as their own Opinion; but firſt to aſſure themſelves of ſuch things on which the Credibility of ſuch Authors in ſuch matters may be made clear to us, and then of thoſe Expreſſions from whence they conclude ſuch Authors to have given Teſtimony to ſuch a thing as an Apoſtolical Tradition: It is plain that the Judgment of theſe things depends wholly on the Reaſon of the things themſelves. And therefore where Learned Men are agreed, as to their accounts of the Authors and their Expreſſions; and where the only remaining Diſpute is, Whether ſuch undoubted Works of ſuch Authors be competent for the conveyance of a Tradition; and whether ſuch Expreſſions, conſidered in all their Circumſtances, come home to the Controverſies at preſent debated; theſe are things whereof common Prudence, and a cultivated natural Judgment may as well qualifie Men to paſs a Cenſure as the greateſt Reading imaginable. And this ſeems to me the beſt way in affairs of this nature, to wave ſuch things as were diſputed among Learned Men concerning their Hiſtorical Informati-*

ons, and only to found my reaſonings on their unanimous Conceſſions. And moſt of the Controverſies betwixt Us *and the* Romaniſts *are of that nature as to be capable of this way of management. Now this way of not intermedling in the* Diſputes *of Learned men, but only proceeding on their* unqueſtioned Conceſſions *is* (*as moſt* ſolid *and* ſatisfactory *to the moſt accurate* Learned *men themſelves, ſo*) *moſt* prudent *and* eaſie *for thoſe who are* unlearned. *And* 3. *even as to thoſe other things wherein I have indeed proceeded on* popular Preſumptions, *yet conſidering that theſe are the only Reaſons which God has fitted to the capacities of the greateſt part of Mankind, and that God is in his Goodneſs concerned to give them Reaſons ſufficient for their direction, and that the Nature of the Things themſelves is of importance to his Government, and that it is therefore requiſite that their directions be ſuch as may not only* excuſe *their* miſtakes, *but* ſecure *them of the* Truth *it ſelf; I ſay, theſe things being conſidered, there will be reaſon to believe, that however fallible ſuch* general Preſumptions *may be in their own nature, yet that God in his Goodneſs has ſo ordered the matter in affairs of this nature, as that thoſe who are guided by theſe Preſumptions, may by the uſe of them be ſecured of the Truth it ſelf in theſe Particulars.*

As for the Method obſerved in this Diſcourſe, it is ſuch as I conceived moſt clear and comprehenſive in few words, and yet withal moſt accurate and ſatisfactory to a doubting Perſon. For any one may be much more ſecure of a Conſequence *when he is firſt ſecured of all its* Principles, *and he can much better judge of them when he has an intire Proſpect of them in the natural Order wherein they lye, and wherein they are neceſſary for the deduction of ſuch a Conſequence. Tet I have neither deduced my Principles* too remotely, *but as* near *as I could find them* clear *and* indiſputable; *Nor have we inſiſted on the Proof of thoſe*

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that were clear, *any further than I conceived it neceſſary to do ſo from the actual Diſputes concerning the* Conſequence. *And I have been careful rather to* prove *than to* confute; *which I conceived to be a courſe, as* leſs Invidious *to* Adverſaries (*who ſhould find themſelves no further concerned than as the* conſequences *of* poſitive Truths *might make them concern'd*) *ſo alſo* more ſatisfactory *to a Perſon in the Gentlewomans condition. And in the whole I am ſo little conſcious of any deſign of diſpleaſing any to whom Truth it ſelf might not prove diſpleaſing, as that if any Adverſary ſhall think it worth his time to Anſwer what I have ſaid, I am not my ſelf afraid of Provocation from any thing which he can ſay in following my Precedent.*

THE

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AN

AN ANSWER TO SIX QUERIES, &c.

Q. 1. *Whether any one going from the Church of* ENGLAND, *and dying a* Roman Catholick, *can be ſaved?*

I. IF by the words [*can be ſaved*] be meant a *poſſibility* in regard of the MEANS, we then deny it. For we hold that ſuch Errors are maintained in that Communion as are in their own *nature* deſtructive af *Salvation.*

Such are,

1. The Doctrines even of their * *Church* which oblige them to do miſchief (as thoſe concerning the Popes *Supremacy* over Princes in *Temporals*, and concerning their Duty of *proſecuting Hereticks*) The † looſneſs of their *Caſuiſtical Divinity*, countenanced by ſuch Authorities of *Caſuiſts* as muſt needs influence ſuch Perſons as act conformably to the Principles of that Communion; and their generally allowing a greater Liberty to ſuch Perſons as are deſirous to reconcile their Vices with their hopes of Eternity, by their licentious Applications of thoſe two Diſtinctions of *Precepts* and *Counſels*, and of *Mortal* and *Venial Sins*, whereby they make moſt *Duties* Counſels, and moſt *Sins* only Venial. Which danger is the more conſiderable to an ignorant Perſon, who for want of Skill of her own, muſt in Prudence, and by the Principles of that Communion, be obliged to truſt ſuch unſecure Guides.

2. Not to mention the ill Influence of ſeveral of their Doctrines on the Lives of ſuch as own them; the very *impoſing* them as matters of *Faith*, the *Excommunicating* and *Anathematizing*

* Vid. *Conſid. of Preſ. Concern.*

† *For the* Jeſuites, *ſee the* Provinc. Lett. *and the* Moral Theolog. of the Jeſuites; *and for the reſt of that Communion, the* Jeſuites *defence of themſelves by way of recrimination againſt others.*

zing all that deny them, the condemning Diſſenters as guiity of *Hereſie* and *Schiſm* (at leaſt what they call *Material*) the inſerting ſeveral of their controverted Doctrines into their Liturgies, ſo that they who cannot believe them, cannot veraciouſly joyn with them in their Devotions, are Innovations from the liberty allowed in the Primitive Church, wherein many (whom all own for excellent Perſons and good Catholicks) never owned, nay ſome of them doubted of, or contradicted, ſuch conditions of Communion; in ſum, their unreaſonable grounds of *dividing Catholick Communion*, and their *Uncharitableneſs* to *Diſſenters*, are Errors dangerous to the Salvation of the Perſon owning and abetting them. For all will own, even the *Romaniſts* themſelves, that the Crime of breaking Catholick Communion, where it is juſtly imputed, is deſtructive of Salvation.

3. Several *Abuſes* of that Church (I ſay of the *Church*, not only of *particular Perſons* in it) are ſo groſs as that ſeveral of the moſt eminent and candid men of their own Communion have owned them for ſuch: ſuch as *Prayer in an unknown Tongue*, *denying the Chalice to the Laity*, *Fabulous Saints and Stories* ſtill continued in the beſt approved Eccleſiaſtical Offices, *Martyrs canonized for bad Cauſes* conducing to the greatneſs of the *Roman* See, as *Becket* for Example: Yet by the Principles of that Communion, pretending to *Infalibility*, it is impoſſible that any *Abuſe* (in defence of which their *Church* is engaged, as She is here) ſhould ever be *reformed*, becauſe it is impoſſible that a Church, ſo pretending to be *Infallible*, ſhould ever grant any ſuch thing to be an *Abuſe*. And many more abuſes are by the moderate Perſons of their Communion owned in the Court of *Rome*, which yet by the power allowed to the *Court* over their *Church*, by the general conſent of the *Church* it ſelf, cannot poſſibly be reformed. Seeing therefore that the *Church* of *Rome* does thus oppoſe all poſſible Reformation of Abuſes of this nature; and ſeeing that, whilſt theſe Abuſes are not reformed, many of them may juſtifie a Separation, and moſt of them may do it when all hopes of Reformation are profeſſedly oppoſed; Catholick Peace on ſuch terms as may, not only lawfully, but commendably, be yielded, will be impoſſible. And the abetting of ſuch a Party as makes *Catholick Peace* on juſt terms *impoſſible*, muſt needs be an Error deſtructive of Salvation. This is a miſchief unavoidably conſequent to miſtakes in a Society pretending to be *Infallible*.

* As

As theſe Errors are thus of their own nature deſtructive of Salvation, ſo going over to that Communion from another, does naturally involve the Perſon doing ſo, in the actual guilt of the Errors themſelves:

1. Becauſe *Communicating* (according to all) does involve the Perſons communicating in the guilt of ſuch Errors, at leaſt, as are impoſed as *conditions* of the *Communion*, as theſe are in the Church of *Rome*. This needs not to be proved againſt the *Romaniſts*, who inſiſt on it againſt Us, as much as We do againſt them.

2. This muſt eſpecially hold in ſuch as *revolt* from our Church to theirs: both becauſe ſuch an embracing of their Communion is more an Argument of *choice* and *deſigned preference* in ſuch as leave others to come to it, than in ſuch as are born in it, and conſequently muſt ſignifie a more expreſs approbation of the Terms of it; and becauſe more *explicite recantation* of our Doctrines are required even from *Laick Revolters*, than from ſuch as are born in it.

3. Becauſe the *Reſignation* of *Judgment* is expected more intire from *Women* and *Laicks* than from *skilful Perſons* (who may in ſome caſes be allowed the Liberty of their own Judgment even by the Principles of that Communion) ſo that Perſons in the Gentlewomans condition, may by this means come to be Reſponſible not only for the dangerous *Doctrines* of their *whole Church*, but alſo for the *Perſonal Errors* of their *Prieſts* and particular *Confeſſors*: both as they are (by the Principles of that Communion) allowed to be the Authentical Proponents of the *Doctrines* of their *Church*, to *unlearned Perſons* (who are not themſelves qualified for judging concerning them) as their Church is of the *Doctrines* of *Chriſt* to the *Learned*; and as the ſame Rules of *Prudence* oblige them as ſtrongly to truſt their *particular Prieſts* for *Opinions*, as they do their *Church* for *Doctrines of Faith*, where they are ſtill preſumed as uncapable of judging themſelves.

II. If by this *poſſibility of Salvation* mentioned in the Queſtion, be meant only [*a poſſibility of the* EVENT] notwithſtanding the dangerouſneſs of the *condition* of Perſons of that Communion, upon account of their being of it; then the Reſolution will depend on this: How far Errors of their own nature *damnative* may not prove actually *deſtructive* to the Salvation of the particular

particular Erroneous Perſon, on account of the *Ignorance* and *Unvoluntarineſs* with which the Perſon comes to be engaged in ſuch Errors? For on theſe accounts it may be conceived that the Errors may either not be imputed to her at all, or be imputed in ſo low a degree as to become pardonable by the general Stipulations and promiſes of the Goſpel for the pardoning of Sins of *Inadvertency* and *humane frailty*, which are ſuppoſed expiable by a general Care of fulfilling the conditions of the Evangelical Covenant, together with a general implicite Repentance of Sins unknown as well as known.

Now of theſe two ways whereby an Error *damnative* of its own *Nature* may be hindred from proving *actually damnative* in the *Event* to the *Erroneous Perſon*, it is only an *Invincible Ignorance* (that is, *ſuch as can be remedied by no means that are in the power of the Perſon who is ſuppoſed Erroneous*) that can hinder all Imputation of her Error to her; and only ſuch a degree of *Vincible Ignorance* can ſuffice for extenuating the Imputation ſo far as to render it pardonable in the way now mentioned, that is very hardly avoidable by the Perſon, conſidering the frailty to which her condition in this Life is obnoxious. So that for judging concerning the Condition of *Revolters* (which is the Gentlewomans caſe) the Enquiry will be, what degree of Ignorance they are capable of that may make their Errors *Involuntary?* that is, How far ſuch as they are, may be capable of being *Ignorant* of their Duty to adhere to ours as the true Communion? And for diſcerning this, theſe following Particulars would be fit to be conſidered.

1. That we are all agreed (*Romaniſts* as well as *Proteſtants*) that all ſorts of Perſons (*Ignorant* as well as *Learned*) are obliged to adhere to the true Communion (whatever that is) in contradiſtinction to others, at leaſt, under pain of loſing the *Ordinary means of Salvation*, and conſequently that comfortable *ſatisfaction* of the ſecurity of their own condition, which they who enjoy the *Ordinary means of Salvation* muſt needs be more capable of than they who are neceſſitated to repoſe their whole confidence in Gods *Extraordinary Mercies*.

2. That all Perſons being thus obliged by God to embrace the true Communion, the Inducements to it muſt be ſuppoſed ſufficient for the conviction of all, and conſequently ſuited to the capacities of all who are thus concerned to receive Conviction.

3. There-

3. Therefore the *Reaſons* being thus ſuppoſed ſufficient for the conviction of all, there can be no pretence of *Invincible Ignorance* for any but ſuch as are Ignorant of thoſe Reaſons, which cannot be ſuppoſed to be the caſe of *Revolters*.

Hence it follows, at leaſt, that if *Revolters* act rationally, that is, Enquire *what* it is they leave, and *why*, and accordingly follow their Convictions as they ought, before their Change; they cannot be ſuppoſed capable of *Invincible Ignorance*. So that the only imaginable pretence for rendring their Error *Invincible*, muſt be the ſuppoſed *Invincibleneſs* of thoſe *Prejudices* which may hinder a well-meaning Perſon, acting *conſcientiouſly*, from acting *rationally*. Which muſt be either,

1. *Opinions* conceived obligatory in *Conſcience*, hindring the Perſons embracing them from *Enquiry*, or *following* their own *Convictions*; of which kind many inſtances may be produced which are favoured by the *Caſuiſts* of the *Roman Church*: Or,
2. *Precipitation* in paſſing Sentence on a partial Evidence, reſolving on ſome particular advantage of one Cauſe without conſidering its diſadvantages, or the advantages of the contrary Cauſe, which might poſſibly overweigh it if impartially conſidered: Or,
3. An *undiſcernible favour* to one Cauſe more than another, whereby we wiſh it rather true in regard of its greater compliance with ſome particular Intereſt or Affection, which may be thought *Innocent*, at leaſt, if not *commendable*; which may the more likely prejudice a well-meaning Conſcientious Perſon, becauſe it may indeed be *Prudent* in ſome Caſes, and it is not eaſie for a Perſon acted by it to diſcern when it is not. But it is hard to conceive how any of theſe miſtakes can be *Invincible* in *Revolters*.

Not the 1. for

1. There can be no reaſon to take up ſuch Opinions ſo *gratuitouſly*, which are ſo Prejudicial to all Reaſoning in general.
2. There can be no reaſon to take them for granted as *firſt Principles*, without Enquiry, (by which means very *abſurd Propoſitions* may be taken up by very *rational Perſons*) where it is known that many skilful, and (as far as can be judged) Conſcientious Perſons do, not only queſtion, but, deny them.

3. *Revolters* from us cannot as much as pretend any Prejudices of Education to excuſe ſuch miſtakes, ſeeing that among Us they find them utterly diſcountenanced. And as they have thus neither *Reaſon*, nor (among Us) *Authority* that may induce them to the belief of thoſe Doctrines: So neither,

4. Can the *Authority* of our *Adverſaries* be any probable inducement to perſwade *Revolters* to the belief of theſe irrational Doctrines:

1. Becauſe the *Romaniſts* themſelves are ſenſible of the abſurdity of theſe Doctrines, and their unſerviceableneſs to their own Intereſts when they have to deal with Perſons whom they deſire to ſeduce; ſo that they are not likely to recommend ſuch Doctrines to ſuch Perſons, as Credible, on account of their own Authority. For if they ſhould offer to perſwade ſuch as they eſteem Hereticks of the unlawfulneſs of intermedling in Religious Diſputes, or following their own Convictions in them, it would be the means to make it impoſſible to Proſelyte ſuch to their own Party.
2. If they ſhould be ſo imprudent as to perſwade them of the Truth of theſe Doctrines ſo prejudicial to their own intereſts in theſe Circumſtances; yet the Perſon tempted would need no other Argument to confute them than their attempts to Proſelyte her at the ſame time when they ſhould teach her that it were unlawful to hearken to any Reaſons, or to venture her own Judgment concerning them, if contrary to what at preſent ſhe believed to be true.
3. Becauſe if ſhe muſt not truſt her own Judgment, but rely on Authority, it would be moſt *Juſt*, as well as moſt *Prudent*, to truſt the Authority of her own Party whom She has experienced, rather than her Adverſaries whom She has not; and therefore it could not be reaſonable to truſt Adverſaries contradicting the eminent Guides of her own Party.
4. Becauſe, at leaſt, the Authority of Adverſaries cannot be preſumed in Reaſon ſo great, with a Perſon not yet of their Communion, as to oblige her to believe, on their account, what She her ſelf thinks Irrational: Nay, rather whilſt it is queſtioned how far their Authority is to be truſted (as it ought, in reaſon, to be conſidered before a change) and whilſt the *private Judgment* of the Perſon is truſted (as none elſe can be) in this debate; what in her own judgment

ſeems

ſeems unreaſonable, would rather render the Authority ſuſpected if it ſhould recommend it, than be it ſelf believed for the Authority.

Eſpecially conſidering 5. that to ſuch a one as is not yet perſwaded of the Credibility of their *Authority*, this would afford a very prudent Argument for ſuſpicion of their Integrity, when they ſhould urge her to the belief of ſuch things whoſe Truth they would not allow her liberty to examine by her own *private Judgment*.

Not the 2. for

1. It is hard to conceive a Perſon educated in the true Church ſo ignorant of the advantages of her own way, as to be *Invincibly* perſwaded by thoſe of the contrary, which upon a compleat compariſon are (by the Suppoſals laid down in the beginning of this Diſcourſe) ſo very diſproportionable to them, and which may appear ſo by the Judgment of all who are concerned to judg concerning them. Vid. II. 1, 2.

2. The fallacy of truſting ſuch partial Repreſentations is ſo eaſily diſcovered by the moſt ordinary *Experience* and *Prudence* in human affairs, and ſo univerſally acknowledged in all other ordinary occurrences, as that it can hardly impoſe on any who proceeds with that Caution which all acknowledg requiſite in changes of great and dangerous conſequence, as all confeſs thoſe of Religion to be.

3. Though a leſs advantage on one ſide above the other might ſuffice, where the Perſon were not pre-engaged in either; yet all confeſs the diſturbance of a change, and the danger of venturing on an unexperienced way, ſo conſiderable, as that they are not to be attempted on *barely Equal terms*; which is a further warning for the Gentlewoman to be wary, who is tempted to change from the Principles of her Education.

4. Suppoſing the Perſon were ſo *Ignorant* as not to diſcern the advantages of her own Communion above any other by her own obſervation, yet in that Caſe, it is on all ſides held *Prudent* to hear on both ſides what can be ſaid by them who are *skilful*: which if She underſtand, and be able to judg of by her ſelf, She muſt then (by the Suppoſals now mentioned) ſee the advantage of her own ſide; but if She does not, and ſo be neceſſitated, even in the choice of her Communion, to rely on the conduct of a Guide, it muſt in that Caſe be much more Prudent

to truſt a Guide whom She has experienced, than one whom She has not.

Not the 3. for

1. That *Favour* which is wholly derived from the inclination of the *Affections* muſt needs be due to that ſide wherein the Perſon is already engaged: both in *Juſtice*, as all generous Perſons conceive themſelves obliged in all Caſes capable of favour, to be favourable to their old Friends rather than others; and in *Prudence*, becauſe by this means the diſturbance of a change is beſt prevented.

2. If any *Favour* may be upon reaſonable and well-meaning accounts extended to one Cauſe above others: Either becauſe the trial of its Truth is eaſier, or becauſe its Truth (if it may be proved) may be conceived ſubſervient to better purpoſes; as Mr. *Creſſy* confeſſes himſelf favourable to the Arguments produced for a *Judg of Controverſies*, becauſe the deciſion of that Controverſie alone would prevent the trouble of Enquiring into the reſt: yet even ſo (if this Favour be taken up and managed as it ought to be by a vertuous well-meaning Perſon) it will not render the miſtake of a change *Invincible*. For,

Exomolog. Sect. 2. Ch. 16. Sect. 2. P. 162. Ed. 2.

1. This Favour (as far as it is juſtifiable by reaſon) is to be had for the Religion *wherein the Perſon had been educated*, and of which She is actually poſſeſſed, upon the ſame rational accounts whereby that other Favour is conceived juſtifiable, and in as high a degree of obligation; both as we are better able to judg of what we know already, than we can be preſumed to be of a ſtrange Religion; and as we can be more confident in the practice of a Religion we have always maintained, than we can in that which muſt ſuppoſe us convicted of having been formerly greatly miſtaken.
2. This Favour, as far as it may be conceived *Prudent* and *Rational*, can only take place there where all other things are ſuppoſed Equal, which cannot be ſuppoſed in the true way.
3. This Favour ought not to hinder the Perſon from an *Enquiry* into the contrary Cauſe, unleſs the Evidence produced be very certainly convictive, which alſo cannot be ſuppoſed in the way we are ſpeaking of.
4. This way of Favourable Preſumption being the only way by which the generality of the Vulgar are capable to Judg,

and

and there being in the true way inducements for all sorts of People; therefore it must be said that if this way be managed impartially, that is, if all the Presumptions on both sides be considered, this must bring them to the Truth.

Hence it follows, by the Principles of all Parties, that the Error of a *Revolter* can hardly be presumed *Invincible*, and consequently not *wholly Excusable*. So that for Judging concerning the Salvability of particular Persons, it only remains to be enquired further, *Whether they be capable of such a degree of* Vincible Ignorance *as may be expiable by a* General Repentance, *and the performance of all other Conditions of the Gospel in an Erroneous Communion?* And the Resolution of this depends on these Enquiries:

1. Whether the *Erroneous Communion* (the *Roman* for Example) embrace the Doctrine of *Repentance* so intirely, according to the Conditions required of it in the Gospel, as that the Repentance performed in it may be presumed such as God will accept?
2. What degree of *Vincible Ignorance* is expiable by a *General Repentance?* For it is certain that all is not.
3. Whether a *Revolter* from our Communion be capable of that degree of *Vincible Ignorance* which is so expiable?

The exact Discussion of these things is too large to be insisted on at present, and therefore I shall only make application to the design of the Question. I shall therefore shew that what *Possibility of Salvation* soever we may allow to Persons of the *Roman Communion*, yet it is no prudent ground to encourage one who is not already of it, to *revolt* to it. To this purpose I desire it may be considered,

1. That all the grounds we pretend to have for our Charity, are rather *Negative* than *Positive:* rather our unsatisfiedness with those Arguments which pretend to prove them *actually damned*, than any Positive Convictions that any of them are *actually saved*.

2. That our *Charitable Presumptions* are principally grounded on things impossible to be known by *Us*, such as are the *Uncovenanted Mercies* of God, and the *possibility of Sincerity*, and even *particular Explicite Repentance* of the *Error* in the *Person*; so that it is very easie for *Us* to be mistaken in our *Charity*, and we professedly chuse it as a *mistake* (if it should prove one) more pardonable than *Censoriousness*.

3. That.

3. That the Caſe, concerning which we Judge *Charitably*, is ſo very *rare* and *extraordinary*, as that no particular *Erroneous Perſon* can be very confident that it is her own: Nay, when we ſay, that their Errors are of their *own Nature* deſtructive of Salvation, and that God has not interpoſed any *General Ordinary means* for preventing their proving actually damnative in the *Event*, it will thence follow that there are very juſt fears concerning the generality of their Communion, and conſequently many odds to one of the miſcarriage of each particular Perſon, which the Gentlewoman may do well to think of ſeriouſly.

4. That the degree of *Penitence* which ſhall be accepted by God in a particular Caſe, upon account of his *uncovenanted Mercy*, is very *hard*, if not *impoſſible*, to be known by the Perſon concerned; ſo that even they who ſhall enjoy the *benefit* of it in the other World, yet may want the *comfort* of it in this; and therefore can ground no confidence in any *Practice* undertaken on that Suppoſition.

5. That this Security is very much more hazardous, and more difficult to be Judged of, in Caſe of *Vincible*, than of *Invincible Ignorance*, which has been proved to be generally the condition of Perſons concerned in this Enquiry.

6. That it is certainly more difficult in the Caſe of *Revolters*, than of ſuch who have had their *Education* in the *Roman Communion*.

Theſe things I conceive ſufficient to ſhew that our acknowledgment in this affair can afford no ſecurity for a *Revolt*, to a Perſon who ſeriouſly believes Us, and is deſirous to be Guided by Us. But if we be conſidered as *Adverſaries*, and conſequently our Authority be conſidered only as cogent againſt our Selves, eſpecially when taken in conjunction with other things, as they uſually argue the Security of a change from our *Singularity* in Aſſerting the Salvability of our own Communion, and our *Agreement* even with the *Romaniſts* in owning the Salvability of theirs; whence they conclude it ſafer for an *Ignorant Perſon* to venture her Practice in that way, in the ſafety whereof we are all *agreed*, than in that wherein we are *ſingular*: In Anſwer hereunto I ſhall, at preſent, only propoſe theſe things to the Gentlewomans Conſideration:

1. That the unreaſonableneſs of this Argument has been ſufficiently ſhown by others; particularly She may conſult Biſhop

ſhop *Taylor*'s Letter, and the Dean of *Canterbury*'s Sermon, which are in *Engliſh*, and are ſhort and eaſie to be underſtood by her. On 1 Cor. III. 15.

2. That the Suppoſition it ſelf is falſe here. For they of the *Roman* Communion do as fully own the Poſſibility of the Salvation of particular Perſons in our Communion, as we do in theirs, both as to the Principles whence it is deduced, (touching *Invincible Ignorance*) which are granted as well by them as by Us, and even in expreſs Confeſſions, when they are pleaſed to ſpeak their minds freely; of which I muſt needs ſay, they are in Policy more cautious, for fear of giving Us any encouragement to continue in our own Communion. If She doubt of this, She may, if She pleaſe, conſult of our *Engliſh* Authors (for in dealing with her I would not willingly quote any others) Mr. *Richworth* Dialog. 1. §. 7. pag. 38. Ed. *Paris*, 1648. Mr. *Creſſy* Exomolog. Sect. 2. Chap. 50. §. 11. pag. 396. *Knot* in *Charity Maintained*, Part I. Chap. I. §. 3, 4. compared with Mr. *Chillingworth*'s Anſwer, Ib. §. 3, 4.

3. That this *Candor* of ours, when compared with their *reſervedneſs* in ſpeaking their minds in this Caſe, is an Argument of our *Ingenuity* and *fair dealing* more than theirs, which is a conſiderable Argument of truſt to an *Ignorant Perſon*, who finds her ſelf obliged to truſt the Authority of one of Us.

Q. 2. Whether they be Idolaters, or No?

I Muſt confeſs that I think the true Notion of *Idolatry* more difficult than is commonly conceived, and to my Underſtanding not yet ſufficiently explained. Nor am I willing on this occaſion to engage on that Diſpute, both becauſe it would be too tedious, and becauſe I think moſt of the miſtakes already entertained concerning it to have been occaſioned by its having been ſtated in *Diſputes* with a deſign on ſome *particular Adverſaries*. Not intending therefore to determine *poſitively*, Whether the *Practices required* by their Church as *Conditions of her Communion be neceſſarily Idolatrous?* I ſhall only, at preſent, recommend theſe things to a Perſon in the Gentlewomans Condition, whom I ſuppoſe not ſo capable of examining the particular *merit of the Cauſe*, and therefore it will be the moſt Prudent courſe for ſuch a one to Judge by general Preſumptions.

1. That their Notions concerning the *Saints* are exactly the ſame

ſame with thoſe of the later *Heathens* of the Primitive times concerning their *Dæmons* then worſhipped; who yet were as certainly guilty of *Idolatry* (if the concurrent ſenſe of *Primitive Chriſtianity* may be believed) as thoſe accuſed of it in the Old Teſtament, concerning whoſe ſenſe we want thoſe Records which might ſo fully inform us. For it might have eaſily been ſhewn, that thoſe *Dæmons* were confeſſed to be of an inferior Order, and not to require that ſupreme degree of Worſhip proper to the *Supreme Being*; nay, that they thought them deputed by the *Supreme Being* it ſelf to convey his influences to *Us*, and our Prayers to *Him*.

2. That if the *Heathens* (notwithſtanding that their Devotions were deſigned for *good Dæmons*) were yet deluded by *Evil ones*, who were by God permitted to interpoſe in their ſtead, becauſe they paid that *Relative reſpect* to Perſons whom he had not declared it his pleaſure to have ſo worſhipped, and before *Images* where they had no ſecurity from any promiſe of God, that none but *good Dæmons* ſhould preſentiate themſelves; How can the *Romaniſts* be ſecure that they are not the ſame way deluded, ſeeing they have as little Security from God's Word (which is the only competent means from whence they can in this Caſe have *Security*) that it is his pleaſure that they ſhould be *publickly Invocated*, and that he has given them the Office of conveying his Bleſſings to Us, and our Prayers to Him, and that he will permit none but *good Spirits* to preſentiate themſelves at their *Images*?

3. That if *Miracles* pretended to be done at ſuch *Invocations* be urged as Arguments that God is pleaſed with them, this was pretended by the *Heathens* too. And it may be, if it were impartially Enquired into, there would not be *greater* and *better atteſted Miracles* for *Invocation of Saints* among the *Romaniſts*, than for the *Invocation of Dæmons* among the *Pagans*.

4. That the ſame Arguments uſed by the *Scriptures* and *Primitive Chriſtians* againſt the *Heathen Idolatries*, are applied by the *Proteſtants* to the *Image-worſhip* among the *Papiſts* now; and the ſame Anſwers given by the *Papiſts* now, were then alſo inſiſted on by the *Pagans*.

5. That as theſe are very ſhrewd Suſpicions of the *dangerouſneſs* of this Worſhip, ſo this *danger* is ventured on without the leaſt *neceſſity*; there being undeniable Security from the Primitive Records

Records and Revelations of *Chriſtianity*, that God is pleaſed to accept ſuch Prayers as are addreſſed to him through the Interceſſion of *Chriſt* alone, ſo that there can be no neceſſity of having alſo recourſe unto the *Saints*.

6. That *Image-worſhip* is not countenanced by as much as any *Venerable Authority* of truly Primitive *Chriſtianity*, and that the Second *Nicæne* Council that introduced it, was put to very diſingenuous Shifts of *counterfeit Authorities* for it.

7. That whatever may be thought of the Worſhip deſigned by the *Roman Church*, yet even Mr. *Thorndike* himſelf (with whoſe Authority our Adverſaries principally urge us in this Diſpute) does not deny that *Idolatry* is practiced by the *Ignoranter Perſons* of that Communion, which the Gentlewoman may juſtly fear, leſt it ſhould prove her own Caſe.

8. That the *Roman Church* her ſelf cannot be altogether excuſed from the *Idolatry* of her *Ignorant Communicants*, ſeeing ſhe puts unneceſſary Scandals in Ignorant perſons way, and is guilty of encouraging their *Ignorance* and *Careleſneſs* of *Judging* in matters of Religion.

9. That the *Practice* of that Communion is generally worſe and groſſer than their *Principles* (as the Gentlewoman may inform her ſelf of, in that impartial account which is given of them by Sir *Edwyn Sandys* in his *Speculum Europæ*) which yet is obſerved and countenanced by their moſt *Eminent Guides*; ſo that ſuch as She cannot ſecure themſelves from the danger of it.

10. That the *Romiſh Church* is by ſo much the more culpable in this Particular, becauſe She has not been content only to *countenance* and encourage a *Practice* in ſo great danger of proving *Idolatrous*, ſo needleſs in it ſelf, ſo deſtitute of all Authority, either of Scripture or the Primitive Catholick Church (which yet does ſo extremely ſtand in need of Authority;) but She has alſo impoſed it as a *Condition* of her own *Communion* (which She calls *Catholick*) ſo that they who are willing to *Believe* and *Practice* all that was *Believed* and *Practiſed* in the *Primitive Church*, muſt now be *Anathematized* and condemned for *Hereticks* for refuſing to *Believe* or *Practice* any more, or to condemn thoſe as *Hereticks* who do refuſe it.

Q. 3. *Where was the Church of* England *before* Luther's *time.*

THE deſign of asking this Queſtion is certainly to make our Confeſſion of *Novelty* (in ſuch Caſes wherein our Adverſaries preſume our *Novelty* ſo notorious as that we our Selves cannot deny it) an Argument againſt Us; yet they themſelves are concerned in ſome Caſes to deny its cogency. For even they cannot deny that the deprivation of the *Laity* of the uſe of the *Cup* (for Example) has been lately introduced into their Church by a *publick Law*. If therefore it may appear that *our Church* is *Ancient* as to all intents and purpoſes wherein *Antiquity* may be available, but that the *Church of Rome* is not ſo; and that in the ſenſe wherein the *Church of England* has begun ſince *Luther*, there is no reaſon to expect that She ſhould have been *Ancienter*, and that the *Juſtice* of her *Cauſe* does not require it; and that the *Antiquity* upon theſe Suppoſitions confeſſedly allowed to the *Church of Rome* is no Argument for the *Juſtice* of her *Cauſe*: theſe things, I think, will contain a fully ſatisfactory Anſwer to the Gentlewomans Queſtion. I ſhall not at preſent engage on an accurate Diſcuſſion of theſe Heads: but ſhall only ſuggeſt ſuch ſhort Obſervations as may let her ſee how unreaſonable our Adverſaries confidence is in this Argument, wherein they do ſo uſually triumph. Therefore,

1. *Antiquity* is indeed neceſſary to be pleaded for *Doctrines*, ſuch eſpecially as are pretended to belong to the *Catholick Faith*, and which are urged as *Conditions of Communion*. This is the Caſe wherein it is urged by *Tertullian* and *Vincentius Lirinenſis* in their very rational Diſcourſes on this Argument. And for this, I think, we may challenge the *Church of Rome* her ſelf to inſtance in one *poſitive Doctrine* impoſed by us which She her ſelf thinks not *Ancient*. I am ſure the Controverſie is ſo ſtated commonly, that we are blamed, not for Believing any thing *ancient* or *neceſſary* which is not, but, for not believing ſome things which She believes to be ſo. And if She her ſelf believe all our *Poſitives*, and withal believes that nothing is ſo to be believed but what is *Ancient*; it will clearly follow that She cannot, in conſiſtency with her own intereſts, deny the *Antiquity* of our *Poſitive Doctrines*. But for the other *Doctrines ſuperadded* by them, and denied by us, which are indeed the true occaſion of the preſent Diviſions of

Communion, we charge them with *Innovation*, and are very confident that they will never be able to prove them, to the ſatisfaction of any Impartial Perſon, either from clear Scripture, or from *genuine Antiquity* of the *firſt* and *pureſt Ages*, which are the way wherein we are willing to undertake the proof of our *poſitive Doctrines*. Nay, their greateſt Champions decline the trial, and complain of the defectiveneſs and obſcurity of the Primitive Chriſtian Writers, which they would not have reaſon to do if they thought them clear on their ſide.

Theſe things therefore being thus ſuppoſed, *That no Doctrines ought to be impoſed but what are* Ancient; *That ours are ſo by our Adverſaries own Confeſſion, and that our Adverſaries Doctrines are not ſo; and that in Judging this, the* private Judgments *of* particular Perſons *are to be truſted, as the meaſures of their own private Practice* (as it is plain that thoſe Diſcourſes of *Tertullian* and *Vincentius Lirinenſis* are principally deſigned for the ſatisfaction of *particular Perſons*, which had been impertinent if the *Churches Judgment* had been thought Credible in her own Caſe, as a *Judg of Controverſies*; beſides that even now this Argument from *Antiquity* is made uſe of for convincing ſuch as are ſuppoſed unſatisfied with her *Authority*, and therefore to whom that *Authority* can be no *Argument*) *which Liberty of* Private Judgment *is then eſpecially moſt fit to be indulged when the diſtance is ſo remote as it is now, when no Church has now thoſe Advantages for conveying down Apoſtolical Tradition in a Hiſtorical way as She had then:* Theſe things, I ſay, being thus ſuppoſed, it will follow that we are wrongfully Excommunicated, and therefore that we have no reaſon to fear that their Cenſures ſhould be confirmed by God. And though I confeſs every Error in the *Cauſe* of the Churches Cenſures will not excuſe the *Cenſured Perſon* for continuing out of her Communion, when the Communion may be recovered by any *Submiſſion*, how *inconvenient* and *harſh* ſoever, if it be not *ſinful*; yet that is the very Caſe here, that we are not only *wrongfully* Excommunicated, but the terms propoſed for our reſtitution to Communion would be *directly ſinful*, as has been ſhewn before. Whence it will follow that we are *excuſable*, not only in ſuffering our Selves to be *caſt out* of their Communion, but alſo in *continuing* out of it. But becauſe this is not our whole Caſe, who do not only *abſtain* from their Communion, but *ſet up* a Communion of our own, and maintain an *Eccleſiaſtical Body Politick* diſtinct from theirs; Vid. Q. I. Sect. I.

our defence herein will depend on the *Justice* of the *Ecclesiastical Power* of those Persons who govern our *Ecclesiastical Assemblies*. And therefore,

2. All our concernment for *Antiquity* here will be, that our *Bishops* derived their power from such as derived theirs with a power of communicating it in a *continual Succession* from the *Apostles*. And this we do acknowledg true concerning the *Popish Bishops* themselves, and do derive the validity of our Orders from the *Antiquity* of theirs without any more prejudice to our *Cause* than the *Primitive Catholicks* did suffer by acknowledging the *validity of Baptism* administred by *Hereticks*. For the *Succession* of their *Pastors* is very reconcilable with a supposed *Innovation* in their *Doctrines* (and certainly themselves cannot deny that it is so, whilst they charge the *Orientals* with *Heresie*, whom yet they cannot deny to have always maintained as uninterrupted a *Succession of Bishops* as themselves) especially considering that the *Innovations* we charge them with, of *adding false* and *new* Articles of Faith, not of *denying* the *old* ones, do not in the least *interrupt* or *invalidate* their *Succession*. This therefore being supposed, that the first *Bishops* of our *English Reformation* received their power from such as had derived theirs by an uninterrupted Succession from the *Apostles*; it will follow that they were *valid Bishops*, and if so, had the power of keeping *Church-Assemblies*, and exercising *Jurisdiction* in them, both for the Government of their present Charges, and communicating their power to succeeding Generations. For nothing of this is pretended to exceed the power of a *valid Bishop*. The charge of *Heresie* it self cannot hinder the *validity* of their *Orders* either *received* or *communicated*; though it may indeed, in the Judgment of them who believe them so, render them obnoxious to *Canonical Incapacities* of executing them, and to *Legal Degradations*, not from the *Character*, but from the *actual Jurisdiction* properly belonging to their Office. But to such *Canonical Incapacities* and *Degradations*, they will not deny even *validly-Ordained* Persons themselves to be obnoxious, and therefore cannot make that an Argument against the *validity* of our *Orders*. And yet even this Charge of *Heresie* against our *Bishops* is not here to be Judged by the *pretences* of our *Adversaries*, but by the *merit* of the Cause; and therefore is not to be taken for granted till it be proved.

That therefore which is indeed new in the *Church of England*, is, that though her *Poſitive Doctrines* and *Orders* be *Ancient*, yet the *Profeſſion* of her *Negatives*, and the *open Aſſertion* of her *Liberty* from the Encroachments of the *Roman Court*, and all her other *Practices* grounded on theſe *Principles*, were not avowed by her Eccleſiaſtical Governours for ſeveral Centuries before the *Reformation*. And in Anſwer hereunto I ſhall inſiſt on the Heads already intimated. Therefore,

1. There was no reaſon to expect that her oppoſition to theſe Errors ſhould have been *Ancienter*, though we ſhould ſuppoſe the Errors themſelves to have been ſo. For there was no reaſon to expect that Errors ſhould have been diſcovered for ſome Ages before the *Reformation*, when there was ſo great a want of that kind of *Grammatical* and *Hiſtorical Learning* which is only fit to qualifie a Perſon to Judg of *Eccleſiaſtical Tradition*; at leaſt, they were not likely to have been diſcovered by ſuch a number as had been requiſite to maintain an open oppoſition. And if the Errors had been diſcovered, yet it was not eaſie to expect ſucceſs in holding out againſt the *Court* of *Rome*, which was then ſo very powerful, and there was no reaſon to expect ſuch attempts from *Prudent Perſons* where there was no probability of ſucceſs. And there was yet leaſt reaſon of all to expect this oppoſition from *Biſhops* then, when no *Biſhops* were made without the *Popes* conſent, which he was not likely to give to ſuch as were likely to oppoſe him; when, after they were made, they were obliged to be true to Him by expreſs *Oaths*, as well as by their *Intereſts* of peaceable continuance, or hopes of future preferment; when, at leaſt, it was impoſſible to reſiſt their *Fellow Biſhops*, the generality of whom were, in all likelihood, ſwayed by theſe Prejudices; when they had ſeen mighty *Princes* themſelves worſted in thoſe Conteſts, and the extreme Severity of that Court againſt Diſſenters; when, laſtly, differing from the *Church of Rome* in any thing was counted *Hereſie*, and *Hereſie* was proſecuted with the extremeſt *Infamy* (which muſt needs weaken the Authority of thoſe Oppoſers with others) as well as other Penalties of the *Canon Law*. Nor,

2. Does the *Juſtice* of our *Cauſe* require a greater *Antiquity* for our *Negatives*: For,

1. Our *Negatives* are not pretended to be of perpetual obligation, but only for preventing the malignity of the contrary *Affirma-*

Affirmative Articles to which they are oppoſed. And therefore there is no reaſon to expect *Formal Negatives* oppoſed to *Additional Articles* from the beginning, before the *Additional Articles* themſelves were thought of; nor to expect a *Reformation* of *Abuſes* before there were *Abuſes* to be *Reformed*, ſeeing that in courſe of Nature theſe *Negatives* preſuppoſe the contrary *Affirmatives*, as a pretence of *Reformation* muſt alſo preſuppoſe *Abuſes*. And therefore the pretence of the greater *Antiquity* of our Adverſaries *Errors* and *Abuſes* is ſo far from prejudicing the reputation of our *Negatives* and *Reformation*, as that it is indeed the beſt Argument of their *Juſtice* and *Seaſonableneſs*. For ſuch *Negatives* as theſe, and ſuch a *Reformation*, muſt needs have been unwarrantable, if there had not been before *Errors* fit to be denied, and *Abuſes* fit to be *reformed*. Nor,

2. Is it any Prejudice to the *Juſtice* of our *Cauſe*, that theſe Errors were not oppoſed with *formal Negatives* as ſoon as they appeared. For ſuch Errors as theſe were uſually firſt received as the Opinions of *private Perſons* before they were countenanced by *Authority*; and whilſt they proceeded no further, there was not that miſchief in them, nor conſequently that obligation to oppoſe them, as when at length they came to be ſo countenanced. For the Errors of *Private Perſons*, whilſt they are no more, are not conceived ſo to oblige us to be of their mind, as that our *ſilence* ſhould in any Prudence be expounded as an Argument of our *conſent*; and conſequently cannot be ſuch a provocation to us to oppoſe them openly in our own Defence. Nor,

3. Is it neceſſary to expect that there ſhould have been an open oppoſition of them, even as ſoon as countenanced by *Authority*. For if even in the reproof of the miſcarriages of *private Perſons*, Chriſtianity obliges us to proceed with all poſſible *candor* and *modeſty*; we are certainly much rather obliged to proceed ſo in dealing with Perſons of *Authority*. We ſhould give them time to reflect, and we ſhould bear with any Perſonal inconveniences that are not directly ſinful; rather than occaſion thoſe diſturbances which are uſually to be expected from a publick oppoſition of them. Nor is this forbearance more agreeable to *reaſon*, than to the *ſentiments* of thoſe Ages who were generally poſſeſſed with

with an exceſſive veneration for *Authority*, eſpecially *Eccleſiaſtical*; ſo that there is reaſon to believe that they would bear with ſuch *Errors* as long as the *Abuſes* were tolerable, however otherwiſe *inconvenient*.

4. Therefore that which makes theſe *Errors intolerable* to *private Perſons* in dealing with *Authority* (for of ſuch I ſpeak) is the *impoſing* and *urging* them as *Conditions* of *Communion*. And this might have been ſhewn to have been late, not before their *Errors* were *defined* and *impoſed* in their *Councils*. And therefore it was but lately that any publick oppoſition was to be expected, even from them who were in their Conſciences perſwaded that our Adverſaries Doctrines were *Erroneous*. And,

5. When they were thus *impoſed*, yet even then *private Perſons* were concerned, in *Conſcience* as well as *Prudence*, to forbear an open oppoſition, when there were no hopes of *doing good*, nay too probable fears of prejudicing their Cauſe by it for the future: when upon their oppoſition, they muſt have expected to have been *condemned*; when being condemned, they were to be caſt out of *Communion*; when being Excommunicated for ſuch a Cauſe, others would have been *deterred* by their Example, and their *credit* muſt have been impaired by the *Infamy* incurred by the *Canon-Law* then in force, and their very *condemnation* would for the future mightily prejudice Mens minds againſt the like attempts, when none could revive the like true Doctrine without the diſrepute of being ſuppoſed to revive an anciently-condemned *Hereſie*; and when there were no hopes of being able to preſerve themſelves in *oppoſite Aſſemblies* without *Biſhops* to Head them, without whom they could not maintain a *Succeſſion* of *Prieſts*, nor conſequently of *Sacraments*, and the like employments and advantages of *Eccleſiaſtical Aſſemblies*; and when no *Biſhops* were likely to countenance ſuch a deſign, whilſt they were held in ſuch captivity to the *Court* of *Rome* by Oaths as well as their other Worldly Intereſts, and when no Perſons of a free ingenuous temper were likely to attain the honour of *Epiſcopacy*.

Theſe Reaſons, with a very eaſie Application, may ſuffice to ſhew that in an *ordinary way* there was no reaſon to expect the Reforma-

Reformation ſooner than it was. And that there was no neceſſity ſufficient to oblige God to interpoſe to raiſe Men up to it *Extraordinarily*, will appear if it be conſidered,

6. That it is not every neceſſity of the Church that can oblige God to uſe ſuch *Extraordinary means*, but only ſuch a neceſſity as muſt have deſtroyed a Church *from the Earth*, that is, ſuch a Society of Men wherein Salvation might be attained by the *ordinary Preſcriptions* of the *Goſpel*. Now the prevalency of theſe *Errors* does not oblige us to acknowledg that ſuch a *Church* as this muſt have failed even in thoſe *Ages* wherein theſe *Errors* are ſuppoſed to have prevailed for ſome Centuries before the *Reformation*: For,

1. Though the *Occidental Church* had failed, yet *Chriſt* might have had ſuch a *Church* among the ſeveral Communions of the *Orientals*. And I know no greater inconvenience, in this regard, in admitting the faileur of the *Occidental Church*, than what our Adverſaries themſelves are obnoxious to, in admitting the like defection in the *Oriental*.

2. The prevailing of theſe Errors does not oblige us to deny an *ordinary poſſibility* of *Salvation* according to the Preſcriptions of the Goſpel, even in the *Church of Rome* it ſelf in thoſe Centuries before the Reformation: For,

1. We do not deny all *Neceſſaries* to *Salvation*, even according to the *ordinary Preſcriptions* of the *Goſpel*, to have been taught even then in the *Church of Rome*. The *Errors* we charge them with, are not of *Defect*, but *Adding* to the *Original Articles* of *Faith*. And therefore,

2. If it may appear that the ſin of *Adding* to the *Faith* was not (to ſuch as were no farther acceſſary to it than by continuing in the Communion of ſuch as were really guilty of it) ſo imputable *ordinarily* as to hinder the Salvation of ſuch as were not otherwiſe wanting to themſelves in their own Endeavours; or at leaſt not in ſuch a degree as to oblige God to interpoſe in an *Extraordinary* way for its *Ordinary* prevention: this will be ſufficient to ſhew that (ſuppoſing thoſe *Errors* ſo *dangerous* as we do indeed ſuppoſe them, yet) God was not obliged to raiſe up, and maintain a *Communion* in oppoſition to them for preventing the failing of ſuch a *Church* as I have ſpoken of, even in theſe *Weſtern Parts*. And that this was ſo, may appear from theſe Conſiderations: 1. That

1. That that skill in *Eccleſiaſtical Learning*, by which our firſt Reformers were enabled to diſcover theſe *Errors*, was generally wanting in the Ages before the Reformation, which might make their miſtakes then much more pardonable than now.

2. That the great miſchief of theſe *Errors* is, not ſo much the believing more for matters of Faith than really was ſo, as the miſchievous Conſequence of doing ſo, the *Diviſions* of the *Church* neceſſarily following hereupon, the *condemning* of good *Catholicks* for *Hereticks* and *Schiſmaticks*, and *excluding* them from *Communion*, and hereby making the *Peace* of *Chriſtendom* impoſſible on any juſt and tolerable terms, and *Abuſes* impoſſible to be *Reformed*. Which was not ſo imputable in thoſe Ages when there was no *viſible Communion* to be condemned by joyning with that of *Rome*; for as for the even unjuſt Excommunication of *particular Perſons*, Providence is not ſo concerned as to interpoſe *Extraordinarily* for their Prevention. This I ſay on Suppoſition that the *Waldenſes* and *Albigenſes*, &c. were ſuch as our Adverſaries repreſent them. If they were otherwiſe, then among them there was a *Succeſſion*, for ſo long, of *Churches* holding our Doctrines before *Luther*.

3. The *Prudential Reaſons* now given might then generally excuſe *private Perſons*, and all ſuch as were not acceſſary to the guilt of introducing thoſe Errors (who were much the *greater Part*, and it is only for the greater Part that Providence is neceſſarily concerned) from the guilt of not *publickly Reforming* them. Yet even they are not ſo Excuſable now, when the power of the Pope is ſo much decried, and there are ſo many *Churches* and *Church-Governours*, under whoſe Protection they may put themſelves, and with whoſe Communion they may joyn, in oppoſition to them.

3. The *Antiquity* allowed to their Errors on this Suppoſition is not ſufficient to juſtifie their Cauſe. For,

1. This *Antiquity* is not *Primitive*, but only of ſome later Ignorant Ages. And the Unreaſonableneſs of preſuming Doctrines to have been *Primitive* only, becauſe they were actually found embraced by the *Church* in *later Ages*, and of Preſcribing on that account againſt a new Examination of them by immediate re-

course to the *Originals*, might have been shewn from the *Fathers* as well as from the *Protestants*.

2. The *Antiquity* of those Notions of theirs, whereby they confine the *Catholick Church* to that part of it in the *Roman Communion* (which might have been proved Fundamental to all their other Doctrines, as they are made Articles of Faith and Conditions of Communion) is contradicted by the *Oriental Churches* generally, who are as *ancient*, and of as Unquestionable a *Succession*, as the *Church of Rome* her self, and as *ancient* in teaching the contrary.

3. The utmost *Antiquity* which we allow for their unwarrantable *Doctrines*, is not so great as must be acknowledged (by all that will Judg candidly) for several, which on all sides are acknowledged to be *Heretical*, I do not only mean those of the *Arians*, but also of those great Bodies of the *Oriental Historians* and *Eutychians*, continuing to this day divided from the *Roman Church*; especially if they be really guilty of those *Heresies* which are charged on them; and they must by *Romanists* be held guilty of some, for Justifying their own Practice of *condemning* them.

4. Some of their present Decrees (particularly those concerning the admission of the *Apocryphal* Books into the *Canon*, and receiving *Unwritten Traditions* with *Equal Reverence* with the *Written Word of God*) I doubt are not more *anciently* imposed, as *Conditions* of *Catholick Communion*, than the Council of *Trent* it self, which was since *Luther*. And both of these are very considerable, and especially the latter is very Fundamental to many of their other Decrees.

Q. 4. *Why all the* Reformed Churches *are not United in One?*

I Presume the design of this Question is not so much a *Curiosity* to be informed, either of the *Politick Reasons* which in the Course of *Second Causes* might have an Influence on those Divisions which were occasioned by the *Reformation*; or of those that might move *God* to permit *Second Causes* to act according to their Natural Inclination, without the Interposition of any *Extraordinary* restraint: but only to lay hold on that Advantage from our acknowledged *Divisions*, which they may seem to afford to the

Prejudice of our common *Cauſe*. I ſhall therefore at preſent only propoſe ſuch things to the Gentlewomans Conſideration, as may let her underſtand the weakneſs of this Argument (how Popular ſoever) when they conclude us either miſtaken our Selves, or, at leaſt, unfit to Guide others in the *General Reformation*; becauſe we are not all agreed in all the *Particulars*.

To this purpoſe it will be at preſent ſufficient to inſiſt on two things: 1. That there is no reaſon why the *Romaniſts* ſhould upbraid Us with this Argument, and that it is their Intereſt, as well as ours, to Anſwer it: 2. That the Argument it ſelf is of no force as it is uſed by them againſt us.

1. *There is no Reaſon why the* Romaniſts *ſhould upbraid Us with this Argument, and they, as well as we, are obliged to Anſwer it.* For,

1. This very Argument was by the *Primitive Heathens* made uſe of againſt *Chriſtianity* in General, as it is now againſt Us; and our Adverſaries would do well to conſider, whether the ſame Anſwers pleadable by themſelves now in behalf of thoſe *Chriſtians*, and actually pleaded by the *Apologiſts* then, be not as pleadable for Us now. Nay, this multitude of Sects in *Chriſtianity* is even now the great Argument of Irreligious Perſons againſt the Truth of *Religion*; and I cannot believe that any Piouſly diſpoſed Perſon among them, can be pleaſed to allow the Argument to be of any force in either Caſe, rather than want an Argument againſt Us. Yet I believe they will never be able to ſhew any Diſparity.

2. If they ſpeak, not of *Dividing Principles*, but of *actual Diviſions*, they, as well as we, have ſuch among themſelves. They have *Diviſions* betwixt the *Iriſh Remonſtrants* and *Anti-Remonſtrants*, *Moliniſts* and *Janſeniſts*, as well as *Thomiſts* and *Scotiſts*, and *Jeſuites*, ſome of which Parties are Divided as well in *Communion* as in *Opinions*. If they ſay that theſe Diviſions are not the faults of their Opinions, but the particular perverſity of Perſons, who will not ſtick to thoſe *Principles* which might keep them *United*, when their Intereſt inclines them otherwiſe: the ſame will be pretended by every *Dividing Party*. If they think it Injurious that their whole *Communion* ſhould be charged with the miſdemeanors of *Perſons* condemned by it; We all of Us plead the ſame, for there is no Party that does not condemn all others in thoſe things wherein they Divide from themſelves.

3. If they think our Differences concerning the *Particulars* we would have *Reformed*, an Argument that the whole deſign of a *Reformation* is in it ſelf Suſpicious and Uncertain; let them conſider what themſelves do or can ſay, when they are, in the like way of Arguing, urged by Us with the ſeveral Opinions concerning the *Seat* of *Infallibility*; whence our Authors conclude the Uncertainty of the thing it ſelf. It might eaſily have been ſhewn, upon this and the like Occaſions, how they do, and are obliged to, acknowledg the Unreaſonableneſs of this way of Arguing. But the deſigned Brevity of my preſent Employment only permits me to point at the Heads of what might be ſaid, not to enlarge on the Particulars.

4. It might have been ſhewn that theſe Differences among them concerning the Judg of Controverſies, tend *Naturally*, and by due *Rational Conſequence*, to the diſſolution of their *Communion*, a Charge which we think cannot be proved againſt that which we believe the Right Communion.

2. Therefore, *to ſhew directly the weakneſs of this Argument*, Let it be conſidered,

1. That whatever Differences they upbraid us with, yet they can never prove that they follow by any *Natural* and *Rational Conſequence* from the General *Principles* of the *Reformation*, though poſſibly they may indeed have been *occaſioned* by that Liberty of Spirit which was abſolutely requiſite for undertaking a deſign of ſuch a Nature; as it muſt on all ſides be acknowledged poſſible that things really *good* may notwithſtanding prove *occaſions* of *Evil*. And how very Unjuſt and Unreaſonable it is to charge *Perſonal Faults* upon *Deſigns* (that is in this Caſe the faults of *Reformers* upon the *Reformation*) all, even the *Romaniſts* themſelves, will acknowledg, in Caſes wherein they are diſintereſſed.

2. That, this being Suppoſed, all that they can conclude from theſe *Diviſions* of the *Reformers*, is only, that no one Communion of the *Reformers* has that advantage over the reſt as that, Antecedently to all Enquiry into the merit of the Cauſe, its Word is fit to be truſted as a Guide in Controverſies, to aſſure any of its own Truth, and of the Error of all differing from it. This, if the Gentlewoman will obſerve, ſhe will find that their Arguments from this and the like Topicks, only aim at. For becauſe they challenge ſuch a Privileg themſelves, they fancy Us to do ſo too; and that our deſign is not to *overthrow* a *Judg of Controverſies*, but only

only to *tranſlate* that Title from the *Pope* to *Luther*, or ſome others of our eminent *Reformers*, which is far from our deſign. But this *difference* in *Opinion* does not in the leaſt prove, but that, upon a particular Enquiry into the merit of the Cauſe, one Party may be found to have the advantage of the other, which is all that we pretend to.

3. That this *difference* of the ſeveral Parties of the Reformation in other things, is rather a very ſtrong *Preſumption* (for an Ignorant Perſon who muſt conduct her ſelf by *Preſumptions*) that there is great reaſon for thoſe things wherein they are all *agreed*, and indeed is a greater Argument for the Credibility of the *Reformation* in *general*, than for that of the *Roman Communion*. For to a diſ-intereſſed Perſon the Agreement of thoſe is a more valuable Argument for the Truth of what they ſay, who ſeem moſt of all acted by the *merit* of the things, and leaſt of all influenced by the *Opinions* and *Authorities* of a few; and there can hardly be conceived a more conſiderable Argument of their *freedom* in *Judgment*, than their *actual difference* in other things. What therefore the *Proteſtants* are agreed in, ſeems more likely to be the real ſenſe of all that are ſo agreed upon an Impartial Enquiry; whereas the *Romaniſts* are generally Influenced by a few of the *Court* of *Rome*, to whom the reſt do generally conceive themſelves obliged in Conſcience to conform. And this advantage of the *differences* of *Proteſtants* for recommending their *Credibility* in other things, above that of their Adverſaries, to the Truſt of an *Ignorant Perſon*, will appear the more remarkable, if it be conſidered,

4. That they are not only agreed in *general* in the *fitneſs* of a *Reformation*, but alſo in moſt of the *Particulars* to be *Reformed*. Indeed if they were only agreed in *general*, that it were fit a *Reformation* ſhould be, but agreed in no *Particulars*; it might ſeem too probable a Suſpicion, that it was not *Truth*, but *Faction*, and the diſturbance of the *Publick*, that was their common deſign. But that is far from being the Caſe here.

5. The *Diviſions* of the *Proteſtants* in *Doctrine* are not ſo irreconcileable as they may ſeem. The *Harmony of Confeſſions* ſhews them agreed in the *Principal*. As for the others, it is plain that our *Church of England* does not think them worth contending for, whilſt ſhe admits the ſeveral Parties into her Communion; and if other *Proteſtants* think otherwiſe, yet She is not Reſponſible for them, becauſe She is not of their mind. The moſt pernicious

ous Principles of all, which most Naturally tend to *Division*, and which make the differences resulting from them most impossible to be reconciled, are the differences concerning *Church-Government*; and in that our *Church* has Innovated nothing that should cause any breach, even from the *Roman*, much less from any other part of the *Catholick* Church. And most of their other *Differences* are no longer Irreconcilable than the *Persons* are likely to continue averse to *Reconciliation*; but these *Differences* about *Church-Government* are so derived from the *nature* of the *Things*, as that they may Cause Division among Persons otherwise well meaning, and of a Peaceable Disposition.

6. This Argument from the *Divisions* of *Protestants*, is principally proper for such as are not actually engaged in any *particular Communion* of them, and even to them ought to have no more force than that of a *Prudent Presumption*, till the Person so Presuming might have leisure to examine Particulars. But that seems not to be the Gentlewomans Case whom I suppose to have been hitherto educated in the *Church* of *England*, and to have had sufficient opportunities of Informing her self concerning us. For such a one it would sure be sufficient that *our Church* is no way guilty of these *Divisions*, whatsoever may be the Case of other *Protestants*.

Q. 5. *Why the Church of* England *doth not hold up to* Confession, Fasting-days, Holy Oyl, *which we our Selves commend?*

IT is a mistake that the *Questionist* does suppose Us to commend *Holy Oyl*.

However we think all the Instances here mentioned *lawful* and *indifferent*, and so to be as obnoxious to the *Prudence* of particular *Church-Governours*, as other things of that nature are by all acknowledged to be; and we shall conceive our Selves secure of the Gentlewomans Communion, if She will not alter till our Adversaries prove them necessary Antecedently to *Church Authority*, which is more than they will as much as pretend to, at least, concerning some of them.

These things therefore being thus supposed, I shall propose two things to the Gentlewomans Consideration: 1. That supposing We were to blame in omitting them, yet this were no ground for Her to leave our Communion: 2. That as far as they are not imposed by our Church, there was reason for their not imposing them.

1. *Sup-*

1. *Suppoſing that we were indeed to blame in omitting theſe Eccleſiaſtical Obſervances, yet this would be no ſufficient ground to excuſe the Gentlewoman for leaving our Communion.* For,

1. No *Indifferent* thing how *imprudent* or *inexpedient* ſoever (and that is the higheſt Charge that the *Churches* miſtake in a matter of this nature, is chargeable withal, as long as the Object is ſupoſed of its own nature *Indifferent*) as long as it is not *ſinful* (and certainly it can be no Sin to ſubmit for *Peace*'s ſake to an *imprudent Conſtitution*) can excuſe a departure from a Communion that is in other regards allowable.

2. Whatever a Separation on this account might be in others, yet it is leſs excuſable in *Subjects*, who are no way Reſponſible for as much as the *Imprudences* of ſuch Conſtitutions, and who are certainly bound to *bear* with all tolerable frailties of their lawful Governours, and who are not indeed ſo well qualified for Judging concerning them, as neither being ſo well skilled in Politicks generally, nor being made acquainted with the ſecret Reaſons of ſuch Conſtitutions, which might make that, which without them might ſeem ſtrange, appear highly commendable when conſidered with them.

3. The Gentlewomans Sex, and poſſibly her particular Condition, may not have thoſe Advantages which many others (though Subjects alſo) have for Judging concerning them.

Theſe Arguments are ſo agreeable to the Principles of our Adverſaries themſelves, as that they frequently make uſe of them for retaining Perſons in their own Communion. Which the Gentlewoman may be pleaſed to take notice of, if any of her Tempters ſhould Queſtion them here, where they are diſſerviceable to their Intereſts. But farther,

4. *Abuſes* in *Governours* acknowledging themſelves *Falible* (tho they be ſuppoſed indeed to be *Abuſes*) are much more tolerable than in thoſe who do not; ſeeing there may be hopes that Governours, acknowledging themſelves *Falible*, may in time be better informed, and may then themſelves *reform* what is amiſs, without the compulſion of their Subjects; which can never be expected from ſuch as pretend to be *Infallible*.

5. If *Abuſes* of this Nature be conceived a ſufficient Reaſon for leaving a Communion wherein we are already, much more are they ſufficient for hindring our acceſs to another, wherein as yet we are not. So that this ſame Reaſon, if it ſhould make her deſert the Communion of the *Church of England*, would alſo hinder her joyning in that of *Rome*, in which the moſt Judicious and Candid Perſons of that Communion will acknowledg *Abuſes* of the like nature.

2. *As far as theſe Omiſſions are countenanced by our* Church, *there is reaſon for it.*

I ſay

I ſay [*as far as they are countenanced by our* Church] and therefore the reaſon I ſhall give for ſuch Omiſſions ſhall be as they are conſidered under that Notion: 1. Therefore, for *Faſting Days*, I think they are impoſed with the ſame deſign of *Religion* in our Church as in that of *Rome* (for that account of *Jejunium Cecilianum*, which is given by ſome, is not taken for the true ſenſe of our Church by her moſt genuine Sons) and that our Church is conceived to have as much Authority to oblige her Subjects in Impoſitions of that Nature, ſo that I cannot look on this diſuſe prevailing in *Practice* as countenanced by our Church. If the Gentlewoman be ſo zealouſly concerned for them, I am ſure She may Practice them in our Communion, as well as in that of *Rome*, as ſeveral others do.

2. *Confeſſion*, even to a *Prieſt*, in order to his *Advice* and *Abſolution*, our Church, I think, owns as much as that of *Rome*; though we do not make it a *Sacrament*, nor make it *abſolutely neceſſary*, in an *ordinary way*, for the remiſſion of every *particular Sin*, that it be *particularly confeſſed*. That the *Practice* of it is at preſent diſcontinued, our Church, I think, is not the Cauſe. That She has not interpoſed her Authority to continue it, might have been excuſed:

1. Becauſe the thing is only of *Eccleſiaſtical Right*. For the ancienteſt obligation to confeſs Sins, tho *ſcandalous* in their *own nature*, yet not become *notorious* (tho that differed much from the Confeſſion which is now uſed in the *Roman Church*) was firſt introduced after the Perſecution by *Decius*, and that in oppoſition to the *Novatians*, as *Socrates* affirms; and this was alſo afterwards taken away by *Nectarius* Biſhop of *Conſtantinople*, who ordered every one to be left *to his own Conſcience* in that matter, for which other Biſhops were ſo far from cenſuring him, that they followed him in it almoſt in all places, as the ſame Hiſtorian tells us, and that omiſſion was vehemently pleaded for by St. *Chryſoſtom*, and obtained for no ſmall time in the *Greek Church*, whatſoever it did in other places. Whence it follows that She has power, in diſcretion, to determine concernining its *actual practice* what She thinks fit.

2. Farther, this being ſuppoſed, that it was in our Churches power not to *Impoſe* it, that She did act *prudently* in not *Impoſing* it, but rather *recommending* it to the Liberty of *private Devotions*, will appear, if it be conſidered that, if She had *impoſed* it, She muſt neceſſarily have excluded all ſuch from her Communion as had not been ſatisfied with it; and it had not been Prudent to have excluded Perſons from her Communion for *Indifferent things* avoidable by her, when She was complaining of the like Tyranny in the *Church of Rome*, eſpecially con-

conſidering that it was alſo likely that the number was great of thoſe who were ſo diſſatisfied with it.

However, if the Gentlewoman be deſirous to *Practice* it for her own Edification, I believe She may be furniſhed with Perſons fitted for it in the *Church of England*.

3. As for the uſe of *Holy Oyl* in any of the pretended *Sacraments*, we do not ſo far condemn it, as to refuſe Communion with other Churches that uſe it; nay, we our Selves retain it as a decent Ceremony of *Conſecration* in the *Coronations* of our *Princes*. Only we again conceive it,

1. A matter *indifferent* in it ſelf, and not Eſſential to thoſe Offices, becauſe of the differences in the Church concerning it.

2. This being ſuppoſed, our *Church* does no way conceive it *Prudent* to continue it; both becauſe it was the deſign of the *Reformation* to reduce the *Sacraments* to their *Primitive Simplicity*, that ſo Perſons might Communicate in them on the ſame free terms as then; and becauſe the Errors of thoſe who made them *Eſſential* to the *Myſteries*, were of great Conſequence, and very fit to be ſo diſcountenanced by a diſcontinuance of the *Practice* it ſelf.

If by the *Holy Oyl* here mentioned, be meant particularly their *Sacrament* of *Extreme Unction*, 1. Our Adverſaries cannot prove a *Sacramental Unction* for the firſt Centuries. A *Miraculous* one they may, but ſeeing themſelves confeſs the ordinary Uſe of the *Miracle* to have ceaſed, there is no neceſſary reaſon obliging our *Church* to continue the *external Ceremony*. This is at leaſt ſufficient to ſhew that it is in the *Churches* power to continue it, or not. Which being ſuppoſed, I add, 2. That even in regard of the *benefit* expected by it, whether of *Bodily recovery*, or *remiſſion of ſins*, or *Spiritual ſtrength* againſt the *Agony of Death*, the Gentlewoman, nor any other Subject of *our Church*, can ſuffer no loſs by our Church's diſcontinuance of it. For all theſe things are as certainly attainable by the means continued in our Church from Unqueſtionable *Apoſtolical Tradition* (as the *Prayers* and *Abſolution* of the *Prieſt* and the *Bleſſed Sacrament*) as they could by the *Unction* it ſelf; ſo that I cannot perceive how a devout Perſon need to be concerned for the want of it, on the terms now mentioned. Eſpecially conſidering, 3. That in the way it is Adminiſtred among them, to Perſons paſt hopes of recovery, and uſually paſt ſenſe of their own condition, it cannot be conceived in any rational way, capable of Edifying the *Devotion* of the

Person concerned, and no other way is suitable to the Dispensation of the *Gospel*. And supposing it no *Sacrament*, there is no reason imaginable why the Prayers of the Assistants for such a Person may not be as acceptable to God, without the observation of this external Ceremony, as with it. And as upon these concessions its Continuance must needs appear unnecessary, so, 4. It would be inexpedient to countenance the Errors consequent to the Opinion of its being a *Sacrament*, which are of so weighty a concernment, by continuance of a Custom which may so easily be spared. These things may suffice at present for satisfying the Gentlewoman of her little concernment for it, without engaging on the Dispute concerning its lawfulness.

Now this Fundamental Principle of our Churches Proceedings in these and the like Particulars, concerning the power of the Church for *Innovating* from *Ancient Customs*, not only by *Adding* new ones, but *Abrogating* old ones, might have been proved not only from the *Principles*, but from several *Practices* of the *Roman Church* her self.

Q. 6. *Why was* Reformation *done by* Act *of* Parliament?

Reformation may be considered two ways: Either,

1. As *Preached* and *Imposed* under pain of *Spiritual Censures*, and of Exclusion from the Communion of the Church, and a deprivation of all the Priviledges consequent to that Communion. And this is certainly the Right of the *Church*, and was accordingly practiced by the *Church* in our *English Reformation*:

2. As Enacted as a *Law* of the *Land*, and consequently as urged the same way as other *Laws* are, under *Temporal Penalties*, and *External Coercion*, and encouraged by *Temporal Advantages*. And this is undoubtedly the Right of the *Secular Power*. And this was all in which the *Secular Power* did concern it self in the *Reformation*.

What I can further foresee in favour of our Adversaries is, that 1. The *Secular Power* ought in *Conscience* to be herein advised by the *Ecclesiasticks*: and, 2. That though *external obedience* may be paid to the mistaken Decrees of the *Secular Power* following the mistaken part of the *Ecclesiasticks*, yet the Obligation (in Conscience and Right) of such Decrees must be derived from the *Justice* of the Churches proceedings in advising the *Magistrate*; so that no Act of the *Magistrate* can make amends for any Essential defect in the proceedings of the *Church*. But the only Effect of the Magistrates

giſtrates concurrence in that Caſe is, that what is already performed without *Hereſie* or *Schiſm* in the *Church*, may be by that means ſetled in ſuch a particular *Commonwealth* without *Schiſm* or *Sedition* in the *State*. And therefore ſeeing they ſuppoſe that at the *Reformation* the greater number of the *Biſhops* then being, were overawed and deprived of the Liberty of their Votes by the *Secular Magiſtrate*, and it is the nature of all Societies to be ſwayed by the greater Part; therefore they may think it unreaſonable to aſcribe the *Reformation* to the *Church* of *England*, but only to a *Schiſmatical part* of it; ſo that the *Magiſtrate* having attempted this *Reformation* without warrant from the *Church*, they think they do well to call our *Reformation* it ſelf *Parliamentary*.

To this therefore I Reply, 1. That the uſe we make of this Topick of the *Magiſtrates* concurrence, is indeed no other than to clear our *Reformation* from being *Seditious*, which is ordinarily charged on Us by our Adverſaries, and much more ordinarily on the *Foreign Proteſtants*.

2. That for clearing the very proceedings of the *Magiſtracy* from being *Heretical* or *Schiſmatical*, to the Conſcience of the *Magiſtracy* it ſelf, it is ſufficient that the *Magiſtracy* gave its *Aſſiſtance* and *Protection* to no other *Church*, but ſuch as, at leaſt, according to the genuine Dictate of their Conſcience, was neither *Heretical* nor *Schiſmatical*. But this Juſtification of the *private Conſcience* of the *Magiſtracy* is, I confeſs, a thing we are at preſent not ſo neceſſarily concerned for; and therefore,

3. We grant farther, that for ſatisfying our own Conſciences of the *Juſtice* of theſe proceedings of the *Magiſtracy*, it is requiſite that we be ſatisfied that they were Adviſed by that part of the *Clergy*, whoſe *Advice* we conceive they ought to have followed. So that if this may appear in the Caſe we are ſpeaking of, this, and this alone, will be a ſufficient Vindication of the *Magiſtrates* proceedings to the Conſciences of his *Subjects*.

4. Therefore the Determination of the *Juſtice* of the *Advice* followed by the *Magiſtrate*, may be reſolved two ways: Either from the *merit* of the *Cauſe*; or from the *Legal Authority* and *Right* the *Perſons* may be preſumed to have to be conſulted on ſuch occaſions. As for the former, it is in the preſent Caſe the principal Diſpute, Whether the *Reformation* undertaken by the *Magiſtrate*, was right or not? and therefore very unfit to be relyed on as a *Preſumption* to prove the *Magiſtrates* proceedings Irregular. The later therefore only is proper to be inſiſted on here. And it conſiſts

sists of two charges: That by the *Laws* of the *Land* the *Magistrate* ought to have been advised by the *Bishops* then possessed of the several Sees; and, That in advising with the *Clergy*, whoever they were, he ought to have allowed them the Liberty of speaking their minds, and to have been swayed by the greater part. These things are conceived so necessary, as that the *Magistrate* not observing them, may be presumed to act as no way influenced by the *Clergy*. Which is the Reason why they call our *Reformation*, wherein they suppose them not observed, *Parliamentary*.

1. Therefore as to the **Legal Right** of the **Popish Clergy** to advise the **Secular Magistrate**, two things may be Replied:

1. That this *Legal Right* may be forfeited by the Persons by their Personal misdemeanors, and of this forfeiture the *Secular Magistrate* himself is the *proper Judg*; and that this was exactly the *Popishs Bishops* Case at that time.

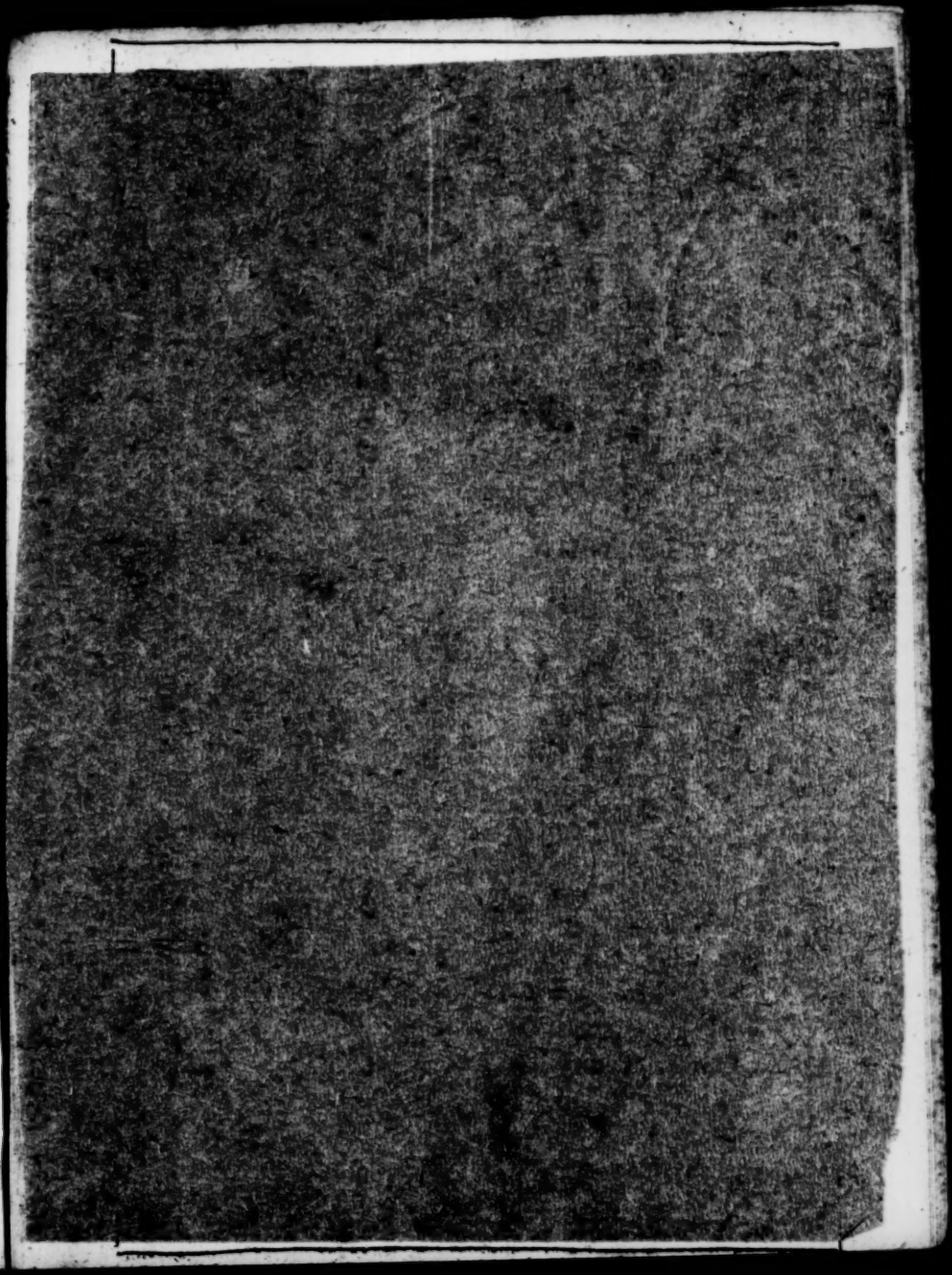
2. That the consideration of this *Legal Right* is of no use for satisfying the *Consciences* of their *Subjects*, which yet is the *only use* that is seasonable for this occasion.

2. *As for the* **Canonical freedom** *to be allowed them in advising, and the obligation of the* **Magistrate** *to follow the advice of the greater part: These* **Canonical Rights** *can only satisfie the Consciences of their own Communion, but cannot be pretended necessary to be observed, where there are different Communions.* For,

1. The *Romanists* themselves never allow that freedom to Persons out of their Communion, as was plain in the Council of *Trent*, and still appears on all occasions.

2. Especially in particular *National Churches*, as ours was, they themselves will not deny that the greater part may prove *Heretical*, and therefore likely to prevail by *Plurality* of *Votes*; in which Case themselves would notwithstanding think it unequal for the *Magistrate* to be swayed by them.

3. This has always been the *Practice* of the *Church*, and the *Catholick Emperors*, never to allow any *Canonical Right* to the Assemblies and Censures of *Hereticks*, as *Athanasius* was restored first by *Maximinus* Bishop of *Triers*, then by Pope *Julius*, after that by *Maximus* Bishop of *Jerusalem*, and at last by the Emperor *Jovinian*, without any *Canonical* revocation of the Synods that had condemned him. Many Instances of the like Nature might be given.

4. The *Popish Clergy* had given the first Precedent of this Liberty themselves, in refusing to admit of the *Canonical Appeal* of the *Protestants* from the *Pope* to a *free General Council*.

F I N I S.